

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5199

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As of January 27, 2015

**Title:** An act relating to members of regional transportation planning organizations representing out-of-state governments or organizations.

**Brief Description:** Concerning members of regional transportation planning organizations representing out-of-state governments or organizations.

**Sponsors:** Senator Benton.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 1/26/15.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Staff:** Kelly Simpson (786-7403)

**Background:** Under current state law, Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPO) are voluntary associations of local governments within a county, or within geographically contiguous counties, created primarily to prepare regional transportation plans and to ensure local and regional coordination of transportation planning within counties. In urbanized areas, the RTPO is the same as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) designated for federal transportation planning purposes, some of which are bi-state in nature. When voting on matters solely affecting Washington State, an RTPO must obtain a majority vote of the Washington residents serving on the RTPO.

Currently, four MPOs include out-of-state representation: (1) Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization, (2) Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, (3) Lewis Clark Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization, and (4) Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments.

**Summary of Bill:** A member of an RTPO representing an out-of-state government or organization may serve only as a nonvoting member of the RTPO or any of its boards.

The current law provision regarding obtaining majority votes of Washington residents under certain circumstances is repealed.

**Appropriation:** None.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Representatives on RTPOs should be accountable to the people they are impacting, particularly when it comes to matters impacting Washington residents.

CON: The Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council serves both the RTPO and MPO functions. The Transportation Policy Board includes one member from Oregon. Because the federal government split the Portland and Vancouver region into two MPOs, Oregon has a representative on the Vancouver MPO, and Washington has a representative on the Portland MPO. Current law has a safeguard protecting Washington's interests, which is a requirement that matters; impacting Washington interests require a majority of Washington residents on the board to approve the item. Ninety-nine percent of votes include a federal nexus. This bill compels a restructuring of the entire planning organization, and would result in many duplicative meetings when attempting to ensure the voting is done correctly. Disputes between states on the MPOs do not occur frequently.

OTHER: Regional transportation planning law requires working collaboratively and in a coordinated fashion, including when regions cross state boundaries. Bi-state forums are used to help facilitate this objective between Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. The bill presents an obstacle to collaborating in the region.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Mike Burgess, Clark County Councilors.

CON: Matt Ransom, SW WA Regional Transportation Council.

OTHER: Kerri Woehler, Dept. of Transportation.